

**Central Valley Flood Protection Board Workshop  
October 13, 2023**

**Staff Report for Board Items 4A & 4B**

Modernizing the Board's Standards, with an emphasis on permitting  
and implementing flood system improvement, multibenefit, and  
ecosystem restoration projects

**Background**

The Board adopted the 2022 Central Valley Flood Protection Plan (CVFPP) Update through Resolution of Adoption 2022-29 (Resolution) on December 16, 2022. Through adoption of the Resolution, the Board identified known and achievable goals that will contribute to the goals of the CVFPP.

At the Board's June 9th, 2023, workshop, staff proposed five themes to categorize the Board's Resolution goals. These included Implementation, Climate Resilience, Funding, Operations, and Strategic Planning. The October Workshop is consistent with the Implementation theme, which includes eight Resolution goals (Implementation of the CVFPP; Collaboration; Board Committees; Necessary Funding; Equity; Implementation of the 2022 Conservation Strategy; Tribal Relations; and Modernize Board Standards). After hearing from our partners as well as Board Members, Board staff determined to focus the October Workshop on Modernizing the Board's Standards. Within that topic, the Resolution identified three goals:

Resolution Item No. 35: That the Board acknowledges to support implementation of 2022 CVFPP Update, including the 2022 Conservation Strategy Update. Board standards and guidance need to be modernized to reflect the Board's commitment to prioritizing systemwide improvements, multi-benefit projects, and projects that consider multi-benefit features.

Resolution Item No. 36: That the Board acknowledges encroachment permits are not an appropriate approval method for all projects, including restoration, multi-benefit, and climate resilient projects that are consistent with the State's goals and objectives for a more resilient future. The Board will seek funding to update California Code of Regulations, Title 23, Waters, Division 1 (Title 23), to advance implementation of the 2022 CVFPP Update and 2022 Conservation Strategy Update through modernization of its encroachment permit regulations.

Resolution Item No. 46: That the Board will seek revisions to its regulations to streamline the authorization process for OMRR&R activities and ecosystem restoration projects to enable more effective implementation of programs focused on OMRR&R activities and ecosystem improvements.

### **Workshop Goal**

The goal of the October Workshop is to identify areas in need of improvement within the Board's current permitting process and to develop agreed upon methods and discuss potential policies, to improve Board permitting and approvals, specifically for flood system improvement, multi-benefit, and ecosystem restoration projects.

### **Problem Statement**

Current Board standards as outlined in Title 23 mainly focus on permitting smaller encroachments that may pose a hazard to the flood control system if not constructed properly. Title 23 lacks a clear process and appropriate requirements for flood system improvement, multi-benefit, and ecosystem restoration projects.

### **Workshop Panels**

There will be two panels for the workshop.

The first panel will focus on recommended policies related to permitting and implementing flood system improvement, multi-benefit, and ecosystem restoration projects that affect, or are within facilities, of the State Plan of Flood Control. This panel will consist of the following panel members:

*Chris Elias*, Executive Director, San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency

*Paul Gosselin*, Deputy Director, Sustainable Groundwater Management Office

*Julie Rentner*, President, River Partners

*Steve Rothert*, Manager, Division of Multibenefit Initiatives, Department of Water Resources

*Tim Washburn*, Senior Planner, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency

The second panel will focus on areas of improvement for Title 23 related to obtaining a Board permit and implementing a flood system improvement, multi-benefit, or ecosystem restoration project. This panel will consist of the following panel members:

*Paul Dirksen*, Flood Project Planner, City of West Sacramento

*Tom Engler*, Principal, MBK Engineers

*Chris Fritz*, Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency Director of Engineering, R&F Engineering

*Jeffery Mueller*, Associate Principal, KSN Inc.

*Meegan Nagy*, Deputy Manager, Reclamation District 108, Sacramento River West Side  
Levee District, Knights Landing Ridge Drainage District

### **Attachments**

- A. Policy Panel Biographies
- B. Technical Panel Biographies

**Chris Elias**, Executive Director, San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency

Chris Elias is the Executive Director for the San Joaquin Area Flood Control Agency (SJAFCFA). Under his direction and leadership of the Board of Directors, the SJAFCFA carries out its mission to study, plan and implement flood protection projects, reducing the risk to people, structures and our economy.

Prior to joining SJAFCFA, Chris worked at the Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) for 17 years where he reported directly to the CEO as Deputy Officer for Administration; served as Deputy Officer for Watersheds Operations & Maintenance; Assistant Officer for Water Utility Enterprise Technical Division, CEO/Board Support Officer, and Senior Project Manager for grants management.

Before his career at the Water District, Chris served for three years as Director of Energy & Environmental Programs at the Silicon Valley Leadership Group (previously Manufacturing Group) where he led development and advocacy of energy and environmental policies to improve the economic health and quality of life for Silicon Valley high-tech businesses and their employees. He also worked for seven years in the environmental programs at the Sacramento Municipal Utility District

Chris has a MS degree in Project & Systems Management from Golden Gate University, San Francisco, California and a BS in Civil Engineering. He has also completed the Executive Leadership Program from UC Berkeley Extension and the National Forum for Black Public Administrators. Previously, he served on the Board of Directors of the Bay Planning Coalition, the Santa Clara County League of Conservation Voters and as Vice President of NAACP Silicon Valley Chapter.

**Paul Gosselin**, Deputy Director, Sustainable Groundwater Management Office

Paul Gosselin joined Department of Water Resources (DWR) as the Deputy Director for Sustainable Groundwater Management in July 2021. In this capacity, Paul oversees DWR's groundwater management activities statewide, including the implementation of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). Paul joined DWR after serving 13 years as Butte County's Director of Water and Resource Conservation. Paul managed Butte County's State Water Project Table A allocation, was chair of the Butte County Drought Task Force and oversaw the development of three Groundwater Sustainability Plans in three subbasins. Prior to Butte County, Paul was Chief Deputy Director at the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. From 1989 to 1993, he was the Director of Regulatory Services for the Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture. Paul received a Bachelors degree in biochemistry and a Masters degree in chemistry from the University of Massachusetts.

***Julie Rentner***, President, River Partners

I'm honored to be a non-profit leader driven by productive and visionary partnerships to bring life back to our rivers. My training and experience is in horticulture, forestry, wetland and riparian habitat restoration, grazing management, soil conservation, environmental planning and permitting, land acquisition/easements, grant administration, and integrated flood management. I rely on partners and friends to connect with communities that support my mission and vision and expand my understanding of rivers and floodplains. I focus on environmental improvement across the western US, particularly in agricultural regions of the Central Valley, Imperial Valley, and Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

***Steve Rothert***, Manager, Division of Multibenefit Initiatives, Department of Water Resources

As the Manager of the Division of Multibenefit Initiatives, Steve Rothert leads the Department's efforts to develop and implement programs and projects, in close collaboration with numerous partners, to deliver flood risk reduction, habitat restoration, ecosystem function, recreational opportunities, groundwater recharge and other benefits produced by a more natural flood and water management system throughout the Central Valley and elsewhere in California.

Prior to joining DWR in 2020, Rothert was the Director of the California Office of American Rivers, a national non-profit river conservation group. Rothert earned a Bachelor of Science in ecology from UCLA and a Master of Science in river management from UC Berkeley.

***Tim Washburn***, Senior Planner, Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency

Tim Washburn served as Agency Counsel for the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA) from 1990 to 2008 when he became the Agency's Director of Planning. He held that position until 2017 when he became a Retired Annuitant. Throughout his tenure at SAFCA, Tim has provided advice and direction to the Agency on a wide variety of legal, planning, environmental, regulatory, and other issues affecting SAFCA's effort to provide the Sacramento area with a high level of flood protection (200-year or greater) - an objective this is anticipated to be achieved by the end of 2025. He is currently an active participant in the Lower Sacramento Regional Flood Management Working Group focusing particularly on developing and implementing a multi-objective program of improvements to the Yolo Bypass Cache Slough Complex that reduces flood risk, enhances ecosystem values, and contributes to sustaining the agricultural economy of the region.

***Paul Dirksen***, Flood Project Planner, City of West Sacramento

Paul Dirksen has worked for the City of West Sacramento since 2004 and has been working on the West Sacramento Levee Improvement Program since 2012. Paul was the Real Estate manager for the Southport Levee Improvement Project (SLIP), which required acquisition of over 400 acres of property and 13 relocations to build the 3.8 miles of setback levee and 100 acres of reclaimed floodplain. Paul has overseen the remediation of three contaminated properties using EPA and State Water Board grants, including a project within the SLIP. More recently, Paul has been the manager for the floodplain restoration project and actively seeking a path to get mitigation in the restored floodplain credited by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Paul participates in the Lower Sacramento North Delta RFMP and the Agricultural Sustainability Working Group.

***Tom Engler***, Principal, MBK Engineers

Tom Engler is a Civil Engineer and Certified Floodplain Manager (C.F.M) for MBK Engineers in Sacramento, CA. He has been with MBK since 2007 managing flood control projects and planning efforts for local maintaining agencies. Most recently, Mr. Engler has managed the Flood Control Strategic Plan for the Yuba County Water Agency; has acted as the local sponsor's manager for the USACE led Marysville Ring Levee project; led the 2011 emergency repair of the Natomas Cross Canal levee slip in Sutter County and emergency repairs in RDs 2103 and 1001 during the 2017 flood events; acts as the operations and maintenance manager for Reclamation Districts 2103 and 817 in Wheatland; provides project management and engineering services for several reclamation districts including RD 10, RD 817, RD 1001, RD 2103, RD 70, RD 1660, and Yolo County Service Area No. 6; led a Proposition 13 funded feasibility study of Dry Creek in Wheatland and Proposition 13 design grant for a small erosion site on Yankee Slough near Rio Oso; has managed the Feather River Regional Flood Management Plan team as part of the Central Valley Flood Protection Planning (CVFPP) effort; provided technical support for the Flood System Long-Term Operations, Maintenance, Repair, Rehabilitation, and Replacement Cost Evaluation in support of the 2017 CVFPP update; and has assisted several clients in the Sacramento area to navigate flood emergency repairs and funding, PL84-99 assistance, FEMA remapping, USACE System-wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) Plans, and California bond funding programs including the Small Communities Flood Risk Reduction Program.

**Chris Fritz**, Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency Director of Engineering, R&F Engineering

Chris Fritz is a Civil Engineer and Certified Floodplain Manager (C.F.M.) for R&F Engineering, Inc. Mr. Fritz provides engineering consulting services to various public and private sector clients and has been serving as Sutter Butte Flood Control Agency's Director of Engineering since early 2019. Mr. Fritz has over 17 years of experience specializing in program management, planning, design, and implementation of water projects. Mr. Fritz has managed projects of many sizes and understands public involvement, the environmental process, permitting, financing, design, and construction of water resources and water infrastructure projects. His planning experience includes regional flood management plans, USACE Feasibility Studies, FEMA re-mapping, flood risk reduction studies, hydrologic & hydraulic studies, river restoration, and water system master plans. His design experience includes levees, gravity and pressurized pipelines, storm drainage systems, erosion control, canals, water tanks, pump stations, and water treatment plants.

**Jeffery Mueller**, Associate Principal, KSN Inc.

Mr. Mueller joined KSN in 2001 as a civil engineering intern student as part of the University of Pacific's Cooperative Education (CO-OP) Program. Since that time, he has grown into one of KSN's leading civil engineers in the areas of flood control, water resources, and flood emergency response, and is the project and program manager for multi-disciplinary design teams. Mr. Mueller is responsible for planning, designing, estimating, contracting, and managing projects undertaken by the firm.

**Meegan Nagy**, Deputy Manager, Reclamation District 108, Sacramento River West Side Levee District, Knights Landing Ridge Drainage District

Mrs. Meegan Nagy, PE has over 25 years' experience practicing as a Civil engineer in California. Meegan worked at the Sacramento District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from 1997-2016. During the first half of her career, she focused on environmental stewardship as an engineer and project manager. Since 2005, her focus has been flood risk and emergency management. As the Sacramento District emergency manager, Meegan managed the response and recovery efforts for the 2005/2006 flood events in the Central Valley and deployed in response to many national disasters including hurricane Katrina. Meegan was the Chief, Flood Protection and Navigation Section and Levee Safety Program Manager where she was responsible for leading the inspections for federal and non-federal flood protection projects and managing review of all encroachments and alterations to federal flood protection projects. Meegan joined Reclamation District (RD) 108 in January 2017 to serve as a Deputy Manager. Meegan

## Attachment B. Technical Panel Biographies

is responsible for leading the RD's flood risk management initiatives and emergency response efforts. The responsibilities extend to include both the Knights Landing Ridge Drainage District and the Sacramento River West Side Levee District, encompassing a flood risk management system of approximately 90 miles of rural levees. Meegan also serves as the Vice President of the Central Valley Flood Control Association and leads the Mid and Upper Sacramento River Regional Flood Management Planning initiative. Meegan graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Pittsburgh in 1996; and she is a licensed Professional Civil Engineer in the State of California.